United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNAVEM II until 30 June; decides not to impose additional measures against UNITA in view of continuing peace talks in Lusaka.

+ Security Council extends UNOSOM II mandate until 30 September; to review extension by 29 July, based on humanitarian and security situations and progress towards reconciliation in Somalia; reaffirms that Operation should complete mandate by March 1995.

+ Security Council expresses concern that current discharge operations at nuclear reactor in Democratic People's Republic of Korea will preclude IAEA measurement of fuel rods within days.

+ Rwandan Government and RPF, meeting under aegis of UNAMIR, accept in principle need for cease-fire; Senegalese military observer killed by mortar fire in Kigali.

+ UNASOG monitors Libyan withdrawal from Aouzou Strip, ending territorial dispute between Libya and Chad.

+ Special Representative Akashi invites Bosnian parties to meet in Geneva on 2 and 3 June to discuss comprehensive cessation of hostilities.

+ In address at Georgetown University, Secretary-General says United Nations is best mechanism for managing international cooperation; cites flexibility, legitimacy and universal range. Human Rights Commission appoints René Degni Segui of Abidjan University as Special Rapporteur on human rights in Rwanda.

+ High Commissioner for Human Rights establishes 24-hour Human Rights Hot-Line; plans to create rights data base in Geneva.

+ WFP intensifies relief efforts in Rwanda, warning that hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced people face nutritional crisis.

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+ UNCITRAL begins three-week session at Headquarters; to discuss draft amendments on services to Model Law on Procurement of Goods and Construction.

+ World Conference on Disaster Reduction adopts Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World; underlines need for community-based approaches.

+ Secretary-General appoints Jorge Ulate-Segura, Costa Rican national, as Director of United Nations Information Centre in Copenhagen.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) until 30 June. In unanimously adopting resolution 922 (1994), it decided not to impose additional measures against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in view of the continuing negotiations between the parties in Lusaka. However, the Council stressed that its future decisions concerning Angola would take into account the political will demonstrated by the parties towards achieving a lasting peace. It reaffirmed its readiness to consider recommendations for an expanded United Nations presence in Angola in the event of a comprehensive peace settlement.

Strongly deploring the resurgence of military activity and the worsening humanitarian situation in Angola, the Council demanded that both parties end the fighting immediately. It condemned acts which endangered humanitarian efforts and restricted the movement of relief workers. The Council welcomed the Angolan Government's acceptance of national reconciliation proposals by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the three observer States to the peace process. It urged UNITA to do likewise, and encouraged both parties to finalize outstanding details at the Lusaka talks. The Council also asked the Secretary-General to report no later than 30 June on those talks.

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In a second meeting today, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) until 30 September, subject to review no later than 29 July. That review will be based on a report by the Secretary-General on UNOSOM II's humanitarian mission, the political and security situation in Somalia, and progress towards national reconciliation. The Council said it might ask the Secretary-General to prepare options regarding UNOSOM II's mandate and future operations in the light of that report. It also reaffirmed the objective that the Operation complete its mission by next March. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 923 (1994).

The Council reaffirmed the international community's commitment to helping Somalia attain political reconciliation and reconstruction, and emphasized that the Somali people bore the ultimate responsibility for

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achieving those goals. It expressed concern at delays in the reconciliation process, and at the deterioration of the security situation, and condemned continuing incidents of fighting and banditry.

The Council strongly urged all parties in Somalia to cooperate fully with UNOSOM II, to implement agreements which they had signed -- including those relating to voluntary disarmament -- and to pursue national reconciliation talks without delay. It also demanded that they refrain from acts of intimidation or violence against humanitarian or peace-keeping personnel. The Council thanked Member States which had made contributions to UNOSOM II, and underlined the importance of having the necessary troops, civilian personnel, equipment and financial support at the Operation's disposal.

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The Security Council has expressed grave concern over the assessment by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues discharge operations at its five megawatt nuclear reactor at the current rate, the IAEA will lose the opportunity to secure fuel rods for measurement within days. In a statement read by its President, Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria), last night, the Council strongly urged the People's Republic "only to proceed with the discharge operations at the five megawatt reactor in a manner which preserves the technical possibility of fuel measurements, in accordance with the IAEA's requirements in this regard".

The Council called for immediate consultations between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the necessary technical measures. It also asked the IAEA to maintain inspectors in that country to monitor activities at the reactor.

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Meeting under the aegis of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) yesterday accepted in principle the need for a cessation of hostilities, a spokesman for the Organization said today. The two sides also reaffirmed that they would cooperate with the exchanges of displaced persons which began last week. Discussions on a draft agreement will continue on Thursday.

Meanwhile, a Senegalese military observer serving with UNAMIR was killed today in Kigali when a mortar round -- apparently fired from an RPF-controlled area -- hit his vehicle.

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Libyan personnel and forces withdrew from the Aouzou Strip yesterday, marking a successful conclusion to the territorial dispute between Libya and Chad, according to a United Nations spokesman. The withdrawal was monitored by the United Nations Aouzou Strip Observer Group (UNASOG), made up of nine

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military observers and six support staff. UNASOG was set up by the Security Council in May to oversee implementation of the withdrawal agreement between the two countries.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has invited the parties in Bosnia and Herzogovina to a meeting in Geneva on 2 and 3 June aimed at achieving a comprehensive cessation of hostilities. The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, and the special envoys of the United States and the Russian Federation, Charles Redman and Vitaliy Churkin, have also been invited to attend. The meeting will build on Mr. Akashi's iniative of 21 May, in which he put forward a framework for an immediate end to the fighting. That framework included provisions for the positioning of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) between the warring parties, freedom of movement for UNPROFOR and humanitarian agencies, and the release of all prisoners of war.

Meanwhile, Mr. Aksahi has expressed concern over the exchange of mortar, artillery and rocket fire in the Posavina corridor in northern Bosnia over the weekend. The firing appeared to have originated from areas under Bosnian Serb control. Mr. Aksahi said the targeting of civilian areas, whether deliberate or indiscriminate, was a crime against humanity and must cease. He condemned the increase in military tension in the highly sensitive area, where a limited number of United Nations military observers were recently deployed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that the United Nations is the best instrument for managing international cooperation because of its flexibility, legitimacy and universal range. Addressing Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Washington on Saturday, he said the United Nations had to be employed prudently, efficiently and confidently to deal with the present world crisis.

The Secretary-General said the concepts of collective security, human rights and international law were being challenged by ethnocentrism, isolationism and cultural animosity. Even the concept of the State, the foundation-stone of international cooperation, had been eroded. As a result, he warned, some were advocating a return to power politics, spheres of influence and other dangerous techniques of the past.

The Secretary-General stressed that development was one of the great contemporary challenges. His recent Agenda for Development sought to redefine and fulfil that concept. Like peace, development had many dimensions. To be durable, it must be addressed at many levels and over the span of time. Governments bore the main responsibility for development, but there was no alternative to an active United Nations role. The Agenda showed how the Organization could serve them by providing information, setting standards and priorities, conducting field operations, and achieving coordination and consensus.

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The Commission on Human Rights has appointed René Degni Segui, Dean of the Law Faculty of the University of Abidjan, as Special Rapporteur on human rights in Rwanda. The Commission took that action on Thursday, after a two-day special session on the unprecedented human tragedy in that country. In a resolution adopted without a vote, it asked Mr. Degni Segui to visit Rwanda immediately and to make recommendations on ending rights abuses there. The Special Rapporteur should provide a preliminary report within four weeks.

Saying genocidal acts might have occurred in Rwanda, the Commission condemned all breaches of international humanitarian law and rights violations there. It affirmed that all persons who had committed or authorized violations were individually responsible, and that the international community would exert every effort to bring them to justice. The Commission also called for an immediate end to the fighting in Rwanda.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, José Ayala Lasso, yesterday announced the establishment of a 24-hour telefax "Human Rights Hot-Line." The Hot-Line will allow the United Nations Centre for Human Rights to monitor and react rapidly to information on human rights situations. It will be available to victims of human rights violations, their relatives and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Ayala Lasso also announced plans to create a human rights data base, supported by research and documentation, in Geneva. The data base will assist Special Rapporteurs who are investigating human rights situations around the world.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has intensified its relief activities for refugees and displaced people in Rwanda, warning that hundreds of thousands of them are facing a "nutritional crisis." The WFP, the food aid organization of the United Nations, is currently delivering food to 240,000 people in Rwanda. However, it estimates that up to 1.6 million people have been displaced inside the country, while more than 450,000 have fled to Tanzania, Zaire, Uganda and Burundi.

WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini said there was an acute need for relief assistance in Kigali and southern Rwanda, where cases of malnutrition were reportedly increasing. Although the WFP has 6,000 tonnes of food in Kigali, fighting has prevented large-scale distributions to displaced people in the city.

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The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) today began a three-week session at Headquarters, during which it will discuss a set

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of draft amendments on the procurement of services to its Model Law on Procurement of Goods and Construction. The proposed amendments were completed by the Commission's Working Group on the New International Economic Order. The Model Law codifies rules designed to ensure transparency, competition and objectivity in the awarding of public contracts.

The Commission will also discuss draft guidelines for pre-hearing conferences in arbitration; efforts to draw up legal rules for electronic data interchange; progress towards a uniform law on guarantees and stand-by letters of credit; as well as a number of international conventions on trade law matters.

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At its final session on Friday, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction adopted the "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World". The document contains "Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation", and emphasizes the importance of community-based approaches. It also proposes a strategy to the year 2000 and beyond, and contains a plan of action for activities at the international and regional levels.

The Conference concluded that policy makers and the general public were not aware of the potential benefits of disaster reduction. Nevertheless, disaster losses had been reduced in some regions as a result of training, technical developments and research at all levels. The Secretary-General of the Conference, Olavio Elo, said the final verdict on the work done in Yokohama would depend on how much safer the world was made in the next Century.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Jorge Ulate-Segura as Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Copenhagen, which provides services to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Mr. Ulate-Segura, a national of Costa Rica, assumed his duties yesterday.

Prior to his new assignment, Mr. Ulate-Segura was Spokesman and Chief of the Public Information Office of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). He has also served with the National Electoral Council of Angola and the Fact-Finding Mission to Cambodia.

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